CORRECTING SOME ERRORS ABOUT MR. ERROL

LEON ERROL, acrobatic dancer of "The Century Girl," to whom the management credits the staging of four of the production's most successful and artistic numbers, is one of the most versatile and accomplished of the younger generation of actors. Australian born and bred, Errol's theatrical career began in Sydney while a boy. While his family had never in any way been associated with the stage, they were all musical to a high degree. The elder Errol could play a half dozen kinds of instrument, and though his four sons and two daughters never received any formal musical training they each inherited their father's natural gift for music. So too did they inherit their father's prowess for athletics and for feats of strength and endurance.

When he was 18 months old young Leon was plunged in the bathtub by his father and straightway taught the first principles of swimming. At 2 years of age he was able to swim creditably against children of 8 and 10 years of age, and at 3½ he was awarded a gold medal by the Sydney Athletic Association as the winner of a swimming contest in which the youngest of his competitors was 11 years old and the oldest 17.

He learned to dance quite as naturally as he had learned to swim—acrobatic dancing making a special appeal to him. At 15 he was fortunate enough to secure a small part with Paul Martinetti, the famous pantomimist, then touring Australia. While his engagement with Martinetti originally called for Errol's services only in rough and tumble dancing, he took advantage of his opportunity to learn what he could from the master pantomimist, with the result that in a few months time he was entrusted with parts requiring considerable skill and delicacy of treatment.

His two years with Martinetti, during which time he toured the provinces of Australia and New Zealand, Errol regards as the most valuable in his career. With Martinetti's return to England, Errol went back to Sydney, and accepted a job as a clown in a large travelling circus, his idea being to perfect himself in acrobatics. With his clown part, he combined a tumbling act, in which he attained the status of a "top mounter." He likewise understudied the bareback rider with such success that he was able on one occasion to substitute for him for one performance without any serious mishap. The next time, however, he missed the hoop he should have leaped through and instead of landing on the horse's back found himself in the sawdust with a badly fractured collarbone and a broken arm. From that day to this he has never attempted equestrian acrobatics.

Then followed a rich experience as a member of the excellent and now famous stock company which George Ringold had assembled at Her Majesty's Theatre in Sydney. Under Ringold's personal direction, considered by many to have been the greatest *Henry VIII.* the stage has ever known, the erstwhile clown and acrobat enjoyed the advantage of a thorough training in Shakespearian repertoire, in which he found himself called upon to appear, on short notice, in such widely diversified roles as *Hamlet* and *Mercutio*, *King Lear* and *Puck*, and once upon a time in a severe pinch he played the role of *Juliet's* nurse, the regular actress of that role and her understudy, both being ill of grip.

Besides his notable productions of Shakespeare Ringold also presented all the standard melodramas, farces, minstrel shows and musical comedies and light operas known to the English speaking stage of that generation, with the result that at the end of two years engagement Errol had played at least one part, in some cases two or three different parts, in the following productions: "Lights of London," "Romany Rye," "Nowadays," "The Country Girl," "The Sporting Duchess," "The Shamrock and the Rose," "The Octoroon," "Kathleen Mavourneen," "La Poupee," "The Geisha," "The French Maid," "My Pardner," "The Golden Giant Mine," "The Two Orphans," "East Lynn," "The Ticket of Leave Man," "The Black Flag," "The Black Crook," in which he played the part of *Karl*; "Ali Baba," "Sinbad the Sailor," "The Forty Thieves," "Puss in Boots," "Jack the Giant Killer," "Three Hats" and "Confusion."

With this equipment Leon Errol came to San Francisco ten years ago and for the ensuing six years he played in stock there and in other cities along the Pacific coast. Four years ago he came to New York, first appearing at the Winter Garden, and a little later at the Ziegfeld Follies, where his success in his own inimitable pantomime as a "Red Nose Comic," to quote his own characterization, was instantaneous.

In view of the fact that he has a repertoire second to that of no other English speaking actor, and also in view of the fact that he is one of the busiest actors in the Century Theatre stage these nights, it is something of a paradox that Mr. Errol does not have one articulate syllable to speak in "The Century Girl."

HOW PAVLOWA TRAINS.

The Way to Keep In Form to Dance.

Since Anna Pavlowa began her extended engagement at the Hippodrome many have written her asking the question, "How do you train?" and since she has established the free ballet school at the big playhouse interest in her method of developing suppleness and grace has been revived again. So she answers the question here in her own way:

"I used to be much surprised when people asked questions like that: 'How do you "train" for your dancing?'

"'What is your secret?' Now I am a little amused. My secret, you see, is that there is no secret at all in dancing. My chief rule is not to bother about rules at all.

"I will tell you how I spend my day, if you wish.

"Here you are, then. I rise at nine. I have almost nothing to eat or drink—a little coffee, perhaps—until noon. I rest every afternoon for an hour and a half, and I spend about an hour in preparing for the stage. I dine at six, after which I eat nothing until my dancing is over.

"I eat what I like. That may sound rather daring—almost wilful. You probably had the idea that a dancer had to diet herself terribly. But it is merely a matter of taste. As it happens, I like fairly simple food, though I am by no means a Spartan. If I did really yearn for things which were indigestible—well, I am afraid I should have to conquer my yearning, for I must keep healthy.

"As to exercise, my dancing itself gives me enough of that. Remember, the dancing which the public sees does not represent all my day's work by any means. Even if you include my private engagements, there is still a lot more that has to be done in a day. I must rehearse my dances and evolve ideas for new ones. And then I have my pupils. I dance to them too.

"I have given you my rules of diet and exercise, and now you may just forget all about them. It is not in these that the secret of my dancing lies. They help; so do the scenery, the arrangement of the lights, the costume I wear. But they cannot make dancing.

"I have not even any rules for you. If you ask most people how to get on they will say 'Work.' I too warn you that you must work if you wish to succeed as a dancer. But work you never so hard you will not make yourself a dancer by that alone. You may cultivate a technique that one has only to see to admire. But you will leave your people cold unless you dance with your heart. It needs something more—a sacred fire. I would almost say—to touch great crowds of people, to draw that wondrous response with which at times they reward those who please them. And if you are dancing with your heart—if you are living your dances—you cannot model your life on a rigid plan. You must live a real life, with its ups and downs, its excitements and sometimes its sorrows. Even your disappointment must be worked into your dancing, like dark threads in a gay embroidery. An artist who lives the simple life is never very brilliant. Even my daily exercises do not matter. They are not essentials. For dancing is something you can never lose. But when you art rehearsing a dance you see, oh, so many ways of improving—you can add so many tiny touches to your work—that by and by you will find you have invented a new dance altogether.

"I do not even lay down rules for my pupils. When I dance before them it is not that they may copy me. I do not want them to begin their careers by being 'like Pavlowa' by doing 'some of Pavlowa's dances.' My dances interpret my ideas. But how do I know that my pupils' ideas are the same? I want them to try to succeed by dancing their own ideas in their own way. I can advise them how to do this—that is quite another matter.

"I remember when I too was only a student of dancing. I was in a class one day with four fellow pupils. There was a mirror in the hall and looking into it I suddenly noticed that one of the other girls (she is a famous dancer now) was copying my every movement—the motions of my hands and arms and feet and even my smile. Even when, purposely, I did the wrong thing still she copied me. I was so angry I never went to that classroom again. It seemed such an affront to art. I was learning to dance my own thoughts, my hopes and my fancies. She was dancing—just a copy of Pavlowa."

MR. SHAW WROTE A LETTER.

And Edmund Gurney of "Treasure Island" Got It.

Probably no one in New York today is more interested in the possibility of a visit from George Bernard Shaw to the United States than Edmund Gurney, the *Squire Trelawney* of "Treasure Island" at the Punch and Judy Theatre. For there is probably no man in this country to-day who is better acquainted with Shaw.

It was about eleven years ago that Mr. Gurney appeared in a Shaw play for his first time. "Captain Brassbound's Conversion" it was, with Ellen Terry in the cast. It was during this engagement that Miss Terry celebrated the fiftieth anniversary of her stage career.

Next Mr. Gurney played *Dr. Blenkinsop* in "The Doctor's Dilemma," and among his most cherished possessions is a presentation copy of the play in book form with this fly leak inscription: "To Edmund Gurney, who has made more out of the character of *Dr. Blenkinsop* than I did. G. Bernard Shaw." This engagement was followed by Shaw's "Man and Superman," "John Bull's Other Island," "You Never Can Tell" and "Pygmalion." It was as *Edward Doolittle*, the dustman, in the latter that Gurney scored the hit of the piece both in England and America.

Relative to the rehearsals of "Pygmalion," Shaw wrote Mr. Gurney the following letter, the occasion being a little tilt between Sir Herbert Tree and the writer:

10 Adelphi Terrace,
London, W. C.
March 8, 1914.

DEAR GURNEY: Your last act has all gone to the dickens. Possibly you share my opinion and would like to be fortified with my reasons.

In the first act your whole scene is played on the point of your being one of the undeserving poor. You get the very last inch out of it, and the slightest attempt to come back to it in the last act would be quite fatal. When it is alluded to there must be no emphasis whatever on it; you must play the act altogether on your melancholy downfall as a captive of middle class morality. When you come on the stage *Higgins* will be somewhere—God knows where; if it ever gets settled at all it will probably be settled by Mrs. Campbell, but you must not depend on that; for however much she settles it, *Higgins* will forget all about it and turn up in whatever spot destiny may lead him to. The point for you is that no matter where he is, even if he's in the middle of the stalls (and he's just as likely to be there as anywhere else), go straight up to him and have it out with him about the clothes—close up, nose to nose with him—and make it clear that you are quite oblivious of the presence of *Mrs. Higgins*. I don't know where she will be, but you can ask *Bell* before you go on. From the moment she speaks to you you must adapt your manner to her presence and throw yourself, with instinctive good manners and the gallantry that has made you a slave to women all your life, on her sympathy. I want it to be clear that the dustman has much more social talent than anybody present. He and the Colonel are the two considerate gentlemen present; but the Colonel is a bit stiff and conventional, while *Doolittle* is a born genius at the game.

Take no notice of *Higgins* at all, except in the speeches which are directly addressed to him, and make the most of your melancholy charm. Be particularly careful to do nothing that Sir Herbert tells you, because Sir Herbert thinks it is a joke to be a dustman. You and I know better. If the dustman is perfectly natural and sincere and unconscious of his being a comic character, he will be enormously entertaining. If he tries on the comic dustman for a moment he will be a bore and a failure; the audience will guffaw at him for the first three minutes and then get tired of him. If Sir Herbert, who has the best intentions in the world toward you, tries to set you wrong on this point, pull this letter out of your pocket and make him read it. He is quite clever enough to see that I am right, for I need not keep up the pretence that all this business of turning round and bawling out the words deserved and undeserved and so on has been your own doing. Play the part your own way and it will come right. The truth is that I not only cast you for the part, but I wrote the part for you; so you may trust yourself in it without any hesitation. Sir Herbert, like most tragedians, thinks that nature intended him for a low comedian, and he thinks that *Doolittle* is low comedy, whereas it is a piece of straightforward life and a very subtle comedy at the same time.

I have to write you this, as there is no use in my coming back to the rehearsals until Mrs. Campbell is tired of moving the furniture and begins to think about her own part a little; indeed, I may not come back at all. I dare say the play will get produced somehow before Christmas. Yours sincerely,

G. BERNARD SHAW.

MR. TYLER TALKS SHOP.

And Does It, Moreover, Very Instructively.

The change made in the ending of "Under Sentence," a change made nearly two weeks after the launching of that piece, makes pertinent a recent remark of George C. Tyler, whose activities as a producer have embraced the staging of nearly 200 plays in the last twenty years.

"Nothing is more certain to cause an audience to yawn and lose interest," said he, "than bringing the curtain down on a tame situation. Each act of a play should end with a suggestion of suspense, with a tense dramatic situation or with a striking speech that will set your audience talking during the wait. And nothing is more certain to spell failure than an unsatisfactory ending to the whole play, and when I say unsatisfactory I mean one that is unsatisfactory to the average man or woman."

Mr. Tyler was talking about "Pollyanna" when he made this assertion. He was discussing the countless changes that were made last season when that play was being presented on tour. No less than twenty-two separate and distinct "curtains" for the first act were tried and found wanting during the thirty-five weeks that "Pollyanna" was presented outside of New York. The present ending of the act came as an inspiration at 2 o'clock on the afternoon of the day on which the play opened at the Hudson Theatre at a conference between Mrs. Cushing, the author, and Mr. Tyler himself. As those who have seen the play may remember, the curtain now falls on one of the biggest "laughs" of the performance, when *Jimmie Bean*, the orphan, who has seen quite enough of Aunt Polly in the play to develop a violent dislike for her, remarks apropos of the "Glad Game":

"You've got something to be glad about, *Pollyanna*. You'd ought to be glad your aunt ain't twins."

Mr. Tyler is in a position to know whereof he speaks when he talks about "unsatisfactory" endings to plays. The most effective ending, from a purely dramatic and sensational standpoint, which he declares ever brought the curtain down on a modern play had to be changed after the first two weeks of that particular play's life because the public wouldn't have it. This was the ending of "The Fourth Estate," the newspaper play produced by Mr. Tyler six or seven years ago.

It will be remembered that the play concerned one *Wheeler Brand*, an idealistic young newspaper man who is made managing editor of a great metropolitan newspaper and who is told by the owner to go ahead and run any kind of a story about anybody that he cares to and that he will be "backed to the limit." *Brand*, in the play, "got the goods" on a Federal Judge, photographed him in the very act of offering a bribe, and at the moment that he was making up a page "splash" on the story was ordered to kill it.

As the play was originally written and produced *Brand* decided to run the story, despite the owner's orders; was jilted in consequence by the Judge's daughter, who was his sweetheart, and then committed suicide. Before doing so he rewrote the story of the suicide of a woman of the Tenderloin which had been brought in by a cub reporter, substituting his own name for the woman's and inserting it in a prominent place on the front page. As the lights went out after his suicide a facsimile of the front page of the paper was thrown on a screen with this item prominently displayed:

"Wheeler Brand, managing editor of this paper, killed himself last night. He was tired of life."

That was too much for the "average theatregoer." The shock and emotional depression which followed it provoked such widespread unfavorable criticism that after two weeks the ending was changed so that, while the story about the bribe was run despite orders from the owner the girl spurned her father and took *Brand* in her arms in the centre of the composing room. This romantic ending so pleased the aforementioned "average theatregoer" that the play ran for the better part of a season.

ON BROOKLYN STAGES.

MAJESTIC — The Majestic Theatre, which will be dark this week, will reopen on Christmas afternoon with Richard Walton Tully's "The Flame." Then will follow Lina Abarbanell in "Flora Bella" with the original company, beginning with the special matinee New Year's Day. For the week beginning January 8 "Alone at Last," the Viennese operetta, is announced, with Forrest Huff and Fritzi von Busing.

THE GERMAN PLAYS.

The engagement of Gustav von Seyffertitz as visiting star at the Irving Place Theatre has been prolonged for several further performances. On Monday and Tuesday, December 18 and 19, "Die Goldene Eva" will be repeated for Mr. von Seyffertitz's last appearances.

On Wednesday by general request there will be a performance of the Tolstoy drama "The Living Corpse," and on Thursday a new comedy, "Der Siebente Tag" ("The Seventh Day"), by Rudolf Schanzer and Ernst Welisch, will have its first American performance.

The next novelty at the Bandbox Theatre will be the Berlin musical comedy, "Die Schoen vom Strande" ("The Belle of the Beach"), which will have its first performance on Saturday. The music of this operetta is by Victor Hollander, best known here as the composer of "The Modern Eve." Ellen Dallossy will have the leading role in the new musical play, with Kaethe Herold, Carlos Ziexold, Heinz Lingen and Bruno Schlegel in important parts.

Vaudeville and Burlesque.

PALACE—Fay Templeton of Weber and Fields Music Hall fame will be at the top of the bill at the Palace for the week, with James Clark as her accompanist. Others are Ned Wayburn's "The Girlies' Gambol" musical comedy, with Margaret Irving and Felix Adler; Harry Green and company in "The Cherry Tree"; Henry E. Dixey in monologue, Moon and Morris in "Two in One"; Ray and Gordon Dooley and the Four Hollays.

COLUMBIA—"Ninety in the Shade," a new two act vaudeville and burlesque show, will be presented at the Columbia Theatre this week by an organization called A New York Girl company, which includes Harry Bently, Mlle. Babette, Frances Taite Botsford, Clare Evans, Mamie Mitchel, Sylvia Brodie, Jane Pearson and Irving Sands.

LOEW'S AMERICAN—Charley Hoey and Harry Lee, comedians, will head the vaudeville bill at the American Theatre for the first half of the week. Others will be Lady Suda Noy, Japanese prima donna; Gould and Lewis, Kelly and Kelly, Barnold's Dogs, William Raynor and company in "Just for Instance." Dorothy Burton and company in "Dr. Love" will be added for the second half of the week.